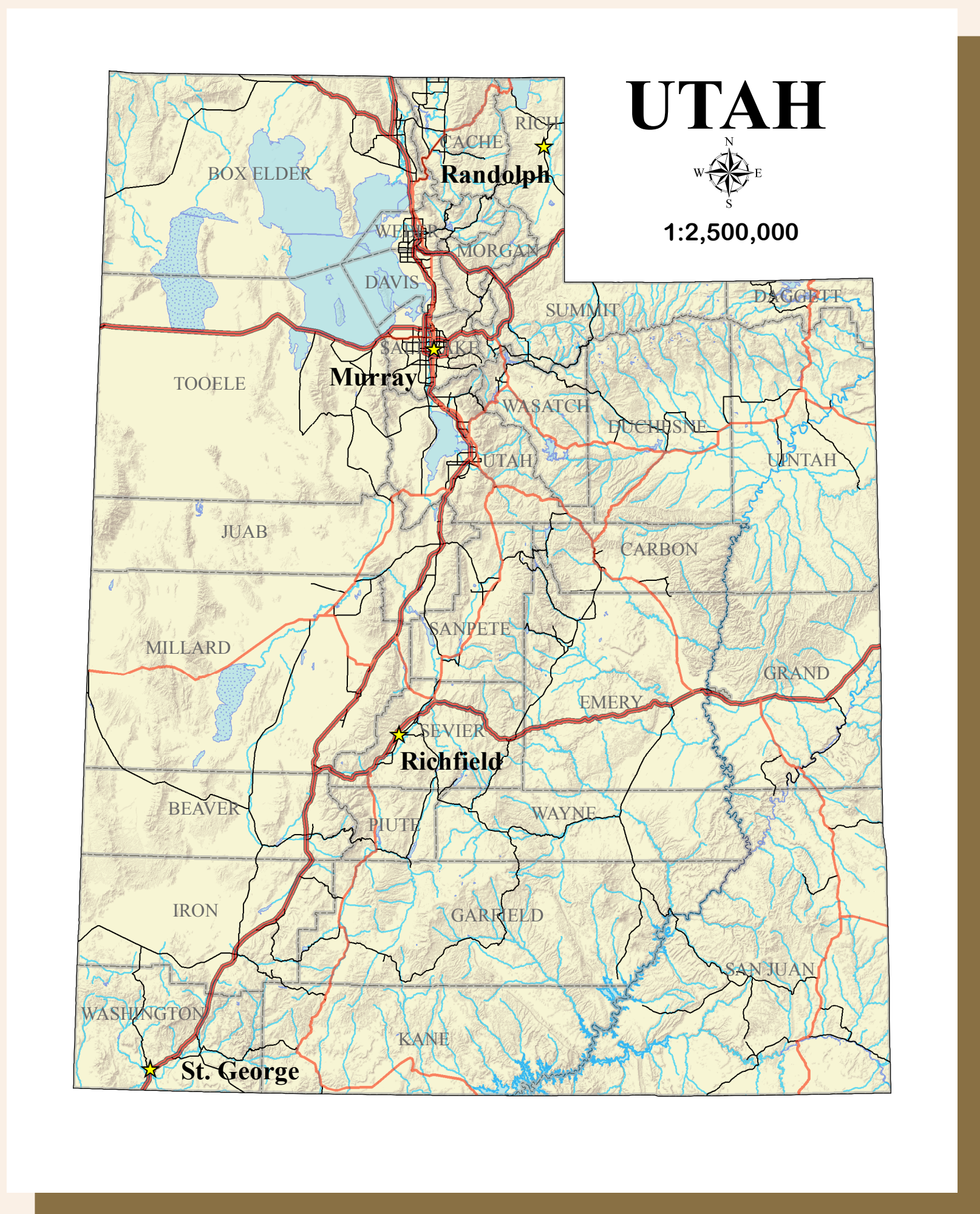


Utah's Enhanced Drug Penalty Zone Law, A Location - Based Deterrent?

GIS - Based Analysis of Utah's Enhanced Drug Penalty Zone Law



A member of the House Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee, which was reviewing laws during the 2006 legislative session, requested this project. The law in question extends buffer zones to 1000 feet around Utah's schools, churches, parks, recreation centers, and other places where children tend to congregate. Any drug related crimes committed in these areas are subject to enhanced penalties. The effectiveness of the law in achieving its original intent, to keep drug dealers away from children, was being debated.

AGRC was asked to present a visual representation of these zones in several different municipalities. The four cities chosen: Randolph, Richfield, St George, and Murray City, represented different types of communities in Utah, from a small rural town to large urban city. The maps were designed to provide a visual definition of the zones. Everybody had his or her own idea of how far the 1000 feet covered. Our intent was to enable everyone to have the same reference frame.

At present the debate is still ongoing. The Department of Corrections and Board of Pardons and Parole feel there is redundancy, which weakens the overall effectiveness of the law. Law Enforcement agencies on the other hand support the coverage and find the law a useful tool in enforcing drug laws



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